2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Peaceful uses of nuclear energy

Working document submitted by Cuba

1. International disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control instruments must seek an appropriate balance between regulation or verification, on the one hand, and promotion, on the other, as the only way to be truly relevant to all States. This remark is particularly pertinent in the case of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The firm undertaking of non-nuclear-weapon States never to acquire nuclear weapons was given on the understanding that peaceful uses of nuclear energy would be promoted.

2. Accordingly, article IV of the Treaty clearly establishes the inalienable right of all the States parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to receive, without any discrimination, equipment, materials and scientific and technological information to those ends.

3. Common sense dictates that, from the moment of its discovery, nuclear energy should only ever have been exploited for honourable purposes and to serve the well-being and economic development of all countries. The use of nuclear energy for military ends can only bring horror and death and is therefore an aberration which, regrettably, mankind devised.

4. The non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty have, in a noble and significant gesture towards peace and security, imposed on themselves the sovereign undertaking never to produce such devastating weapons. That commitment did not, however, betoken a retreat from economic development. On the contrary: it gave them all the more right to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as article IV of the Treaty specifies.

5. The States in question have undertaken to place all their peaceful nuclear activity under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), through comprehensive safeguards agreements. This should guarantee that their economic and technological development is not impaired.

6. For these reasons, the unilateral restrictions put in place by some States parties to the Treaty — in most cases for political reasons — that impede other States parties' peaceful uses of nuclear energy are a violation of the Treaty, and should cease.

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7. Also unacceptable is the existence of export-control regimes which rely on selective and discriminatory criteria and which, in practice, seriously hamper the inalienable right of all States to use for peaceful purposes the various nuclear-related resources and technologies available.

8. In Cuba's view, the most effective model for export and import controls is one which is negotiated and implemented in a multilateral environment and essentially depends on the widest possible involvement of countries which are prepared to reconcile their domestic controls and regulations with the aim of facilitating the monitoring of the activity which is subject to regulation. Only such broad and non-discriminatory involvement can guarantee effective achievement of the objectives being pursued.

9. Cuba has consistently maintained the view that export and import controls on dual-use technologies are not an end in themselves but a useful tool which States have at their disposal to prevent scientific and technological advances from being diverted to military use. Keeping them separate from a system made up of security and development components only increases their ineffectiveness. If it is really the intention that such controls should prevent the development of weapons, including nuclear weapons, they should be part of a system which encompasses elements of disarmament, non-proliferation, verification and international cooperation to promote the socio-economic development of all countries, particularly those of the South.

10. Cuba considers that calling into question the development of programmes for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the context of the Treaty not only goes against the spirit and letter of that international legal instrument but also impedes the full and effective implementation of the mandate assigned to IAEA. The Agency's functions include encouraging and assisting research on, and development and practical application of, atomic energy for peaceful uses throughout the world.

11. A strengthened system of safeguards within the framework of IAEA must in no way lead to limits or conditions restricting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy but instead should provide encouragement. Cuba defends the inalienable right of all States to engage in research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and to receive — without discrimination — transfers of materials, equipment and scientific and technological information to those ends.

12. The Agency must strike a suitable balance between its three pillars: technical cooperation, security and verification. Cuba places a high priority on the Agency's technical cooperation programme and acknowledges the efforts of the IAEA secretariat to reinforce it. In that connection, we, as member States of the Agency, must make sure that IAEA has sufficient, predictable and secure resources for the technical cooperation programme.

13. Over the years, Cuba has benefited greatly from IAEA technical cooperation, deriving optimum benefit from the resources provided — which have been channelled to the country's priority programmes — and achieving substantial results. Technical cooperation has covered public health, agriculture, hydrology, food and radiological protection and security.

14. Cuba fully supports implementation of the regional cooperation agreements for the promotion of nuclear science and technology concluded under the auspices of IAEA, such as the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research,

Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA), the Regional Cooperative Agreement for the Advancement of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARCAL), the Cooperative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (ARASIA) and the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific (RCA), all examples of South-South cooperation.

15. Nuclear energy should be used solely for peaceful purposes and for the well-being and economic development of humanity. Consequently, the primary aim and raison d'être of the Treaty is to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Cuba became a party to the Treaty to promote that aim, and will be unstinting in its effort to fulfil it.